

The level and type of protection for Type 5 waters will vary between sites. The department may, for example, leave standing trees or brush on the stream bank for wildlife habitat and to moderate water temperature for downstream fish habitat. In other cases, the department may seek to protect water quality.

Where it is not possible with current technology to economically remove certain trees within the zone without causing serious degradation to down-stream aquatic systems, harvesting will be deferred.

## **No. 21: Wetlands**

- ▼ The department will allow no overall net loss of naturally occurring wetland acreage and function.

## **Discussion**

This policy represents a continuation of current department policy, adopted in 1991.

Wetlands are transition areas between water and land, where the water is at or near the surface of the soil. Some wetlands, such as marshes and estuaries, are easy to identify, while others are less obvious and may require knowledge of plants or soil testing to provide positive identification.

Wetlands have many functions and values, including flood water storage, fish and wildlife habitat, and plant diversity. The area of wetlands on state forest lands varies with each region.

In January 1991, the department adopted a policy of "no overall net loss of wetlands on state lands." The department's policy recognizes that some loss of function may occur in the course of its forest management activities. The policy emphasizes avoiding the loss of wetlands and allows for mitigation of loss if it occurs. If mitigation is necessary, preference will be given to on-site and in-kind replacement of acreage and function.



# WILDLIFE POLICY

Forests in the Pacific Northwest are rich in wildlife species because of the temperate climate and wide range of elevations.

In the last decade, however, a considerable amount of native wildlife habitat has been developed or converted to other uses. Between 1979 and 1989, for example, about 170,000 acres (equivalent to approximately 250 square miles) were converted from forest to nonforest uses in the Puget Sound area. The loss and change of character of the habitat puts increasing pressure on state forest lands, particularly low-elevation properties, to serve as native wildlife habitat.

The department believes that a successful forest wildlife policy will accomplish the following goals:

- Sustain wildlife populations and communities.
- Retain overall department control of forest management.
- Protect trust assets.
- Affirm the department's responsibility to conserve public resources.

The policy below focuses on those activities over which the department has control but does not attempt to address larger, regional issues.

## No. 22: Wildlife Habitat

- ▼ **The department will provide wildlife habitat conditions which have the capacity to sustain native wildlife populations or communities. The department will develop wildlife habitat objectives based upon habitat availability and function, species status and species vulnerability, and trust obligations. When there are apparent conflicts between meeting the wildlife habitat and trust management objectives, the department will seek balanced solutions and policies.**

## Discussion

One of the greatest challenges facing the department is to provide wildlife habitat for native species while generating income for the trusts from the sale of timber. Where it can be accomplished the department will attempt to do both.

The policy provides a higher degree of certainty that wildlife populations will be sustained on state forest lands. It is intended to prevent future management crises by addressing issues today. The policy is intended to help maintain populations of wildlife species and prevent them from becoming listed as endangered or threatened.

If an insufficient trust land base exists for certain species or communities, the department cannot realistically expect to maintain or improve the capability to support wildlife without agreements with adjacent landowners. The department intends to develop these agreements where appropriate.

The department will develop its wildlife habitat objectives for state forest land by identifying certain species and communities that need protection. Although this effort will occur as part of the planning process (see Policy No. 16, Landscape Planning, pg. 30), it will be based upon meeting statewide goals. These goals will also guide activities on isolated tracts of land not subject to landscape plans.

The department will provide those habitat conditions that have the capacity to sustain the identified wildlife populations or communities over time.

The department will apply various techniques to provide wildlife habitat, including but not limited to:

- Using different harvest methods to retain forest structure.
- Modifying the size, distribution, pattern and scheduling of harvest units.
- Varying harvest ages and protecting forest understory and low-value trees from logging damage.
- Using site-specific thinning and harvest designs to develop forest diversity.
- Using strategies which focus on groups of species and large geographic areas rather than individual species and sites.
- Retaining live standing trees, dead standing trees and defective trees and logs.

The technique of retaining live, defective trees and dead standing trees (reserve trees) has created a potential conflict in recent years because reserve trees can create hazardous areas in logging operations. Reserve tree retention is one of the regulatory changes currently being considered by the Forest Practices Board; operational guidelines have been drafted to describe methods of reserve tree retention that are compatible with state safety regulations. (The state safety code prohibits exposure of workers to hazardous conditions.) The department expects this issue will be resolved soon.



# ENDANGERED, THREATENED AND SENSITIVE SPECIES POLICY

Endangered, threatened and sensitive species are, by definition, those species most in need of special attention. Because of their status, they are among the species of greatest interest to the public.

The species involved (for example, the northern spotted owl), often have habitat requirements that conflict with timber harvest and other activities. Various laws, regulations, and other legal requirements protect these species and their habitats.

For these reasons an additional policy is needed that specifically addresses endangered, threatened and sensitive species.

The policy below addresses wildlife, fish, invertebrates and plants. Although endangered, threatened and sensitive wildlife species are included specifically in this policy, they also are addressed in the wildlife habitat policy discussed above, which is designed to help prevent future threatened and endangered species listings by acting prudently today.

## No. 23: Endangered Species

- ▼ The department will meet the requirements of federal and state laws and other legal requirements that protect endangered, threatened and sensitive species and their habitats. In addition, the department will voluntarily participate in efforts to recover and restore endangered and threatened species to the extent that such participation is consistent with trust obligations.

## Discussion

This policy clarifies existing policy. It directs the department to actively participate in efforts to recover and restore endangered and threatened species, including plants, to the extent that such participation is consistent with trust obligations.

The department recognizes that there are opportunities to be an active participant in recovery and restoration efforts and to benefit endangered, threatened and sensitive species without compromising its trust obligations.

# HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES POLICY

The department is required by law to protect historic and archaeological sites.

Historic and archaeological places are broadly defined as locations, structures or other evidence containing material remains of human life or activity which are of archeological and historic significance, or which contain places associated with a personality important in history, or those sites where significant cultural or historic events have taken place, even though no physical evidence of the event remains.

## No. 24: Identifying Historic Sites

- ▼ The department will establish a program to identify and inventory historic and archaeological sites and protect them at a level which, at a minimum, meets regulatory requirements.

### Discussion

The department intends to seek funds to establish a program for identifying and protecting historic and archeological places on state forest lands. Such a program would be developed in cooperation with public and tribal interests.

Special consideration will be given to the historical and cultural concerns of the tribes. The department recognizes that Native Americans have a special interest in state forest lands. Where possible, the department intends to work with the tribes to preserve their traditional and cultural heritage. Although the components of the program have not been identified yet, the department intends to establish this program as quickly as funding becomes available.

The department currently maintains a computerized tracking system (TRAX) which has a record of known historical and archaeological sites registered with the state Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. The department intends to develop a more complete inventory than is currently available.

## PUBLIC ACCESS AND RIGHTS OF WAY POLICIES

The department has formulated policies regarding public access (including the development and maintenance of roads) that will meet management objectives and minimize detrimental impacts to the forest environment. The policies described below are intended to supplement existing state statutes.

The department's decisions regarding public access also may affect surrounding landowners, many of whom are private individuals or entities that have purchased, or wish to purchase, rights of ways from the department for roads and utilities. In other instances, the department may wish to acquire rights of way across private land to reach state forest land.

In addition, the general public uses the department's roads for recreation or to gain access to other state lands (for example, state parks).

Providing and acquiring public access requires the department to balance trust management obligations, environmental concerns, public safety and other needs. The policies described below are intended to accomplish that goal.

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## **No. 25: Providing Public Access**

- ▼ **The department will provide public access for multiple uses on state forest lands. In certain circumstances the department will control vehicular or other access, but only where necessary to accomplish specific management objectives. Public access may be closed, restricted or limited to protect public safety; to prevent theft, vandalism and garbage dumping; to protect soils, water quality, plants and animals; or to meet other objectives identified in the plan.**

### **Discussion**

This policy represents a change from current policy by placing more emphasis on the department's ability to restrict access to state forest lands to prevent problems, such as vandalism and garbage dumping. It allows the department greater flexibility in protecting public resources.

The policy will allow the department to continue providing public access for multiple use of state forest lands. No overall change in that part of the policy is contemplated. However, there are situations where the department will close a road or restrict certain uses.

These situations include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Protecting roads and trails. Certain roads may need to be closed, perhaps seasonally, to protect them from damage.
- Cooperating with other public agencies to restrict access to protect sensitive wildlife habitat or to provide quality hunting experience.
- Closing roads to protect public health and safety; to reduce vandalism; prevent waste dumping; and reduce or prevent other environmental hazards.
- Eliminating roads when access routes are no longer needed for trust management purposes or where these roads do not provide public access to existing recreation areas.
- Closing access routes to protect other public interests or resources such as water, fish or vegetation.

## **No. 26: Granting Public Rights of Way**

- ▼ **The department will grant rights of way to private individuals or entities when there is an opportunity for enhancing trust assets and when any detriments are offset.**

### **Discussion**

This is the current department policy regarding rights of way. It recognizes that others may need rights of way across state forest lands. Permanent and temporary rights of way include grants or easements for utility, domestic use, timber haul and other purposes.

Granting rights of way without careful consideration of the potential detriments may create a myriad of problems, including permanent encumbrances on state property and hindrances to effective management. Encumbrances may lower the value of the land and impede future plans for the area. When reviewing requests for rights of way access on state lands, the department will consider the effect of the proposed action on trust assets and the environment.

## No. 27: Acquiring Rights of Way

- ▼ The department will acquire right of way across private or other public lands to department-managed forest land when this access is needed to increase the value of trust assets or for management purposes. The department will acquire these rights of ways by gift, purchase, exchange, condemnation or road use agreement. Permanent, public access rights are preferred.

### Discussion

This policy continues existing practice. The policy recognizes the continuing need to acquire access to all state forest land. Access almost always improves the trust asset value of the land. This principle is true whether valuable materials, such as timber, are removed from the land or whether the property is sold or exchanged for other lands.

Management purposes include timber harvest and other multiple uses, including recreation. Acquired access may include roads, trails, drainage and utility easements and other rights of way.

## No. 28: Developing and Maintaining Roads

- ▼ The department will develop and maintain a road system which integrates management needs and controls effects on the forest environment.

### Discussion

At present, the department owns and maintains about 12,000 miles of roads. To develop and maintain this system as cost-effectively as possible, the department intends to:

- Reduce total amount of roads through coordination and cooperation with others.
- Use the most cost-efficient road construction and maintenance methods that meet applicable laws.
- Control adverse environmental impacts of roads and close roads when justified.
- Build and maintain roads to meet or exceed safety standards for the uses intended.

The goal is to have an overall road system that meets management needs, provides for multiple uses and reduces detrimental effects on the forest environment.

The department will attempt to maintain low vegetation along its road sides to stabilize soil and prevent erosion. The department intends to minimize the amount of money and effort needed for vegetation control. In cases where control is necessary, the department may use mechanical methods or herbicides. Mechanical methods are preferred. Treatment with herbicides will be based on local conditions. If herbicides are needed, the department will give priority to rapidly degradable and low-toxicity herbicides.

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# FOREST RECREATION POLICY

## No. 29: Recreation on State Forest Lands

- ▼ The department will allow recreation on state forest land when compatible with the objectives of the Forest Resource Plan. As part of its efforts, the department will continue to comply with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

### Discussion

State forest lands have historically been open to the public through the Multiple Use Act and long-standing department policy. The law allows public use of state forest lands when compatible with management activities and when it does not damage resources or interfere with trust management responsibilities.

The department intends to continue allowing recreation activities on state forest land, such as hiking, hunting, fishing and berry picking, which meet the above criteria.

The department's Land and Water Conservation Division has the responsibility to plan for and manage recreational sites leased from the trusts. These sites include public campgrounds, off-road vehicle sites and other leased recreation areas.

If proposals are submitted to the department to develop additional recreational sites on state forest land, the department will ask the Land and Water Conservation Division to review the application.

The division will take the lead in obtaining funds and leasing properties from the trusts for proposed sites if the application is consistent with both the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (part of the Washington Outdoor Assessment and Policy Plan, April 1990) and the objectives of the Forest Resource Plan.

For more information on when the department will grant access to the public, see Policy No. 25, Providing Public Access, pg. 41.